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SUBJECT: P-3 COMPROMISE ON DEVELOPMENT CAN RESCUE OUTCOME DOCUMENT, FRENCH ARGUE

REF: STATE 163224

Classified By: Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt, Reasons 1.4b,d

1. (C) Salvaging the Outcome Document (OD) for the High Level Summit hinges on P-3 compromise, in the view of Quai d'Orsay action officer Nicolas Kassianides. At a September 7 meeting with poloff to discuss reftel demarche, Kassianides emphasized that finding mutually acceptable language on development and the environment was now the French priority. He noted that Ambassador Levitte had provided draft language on September 6 to Under Secretary Burns for USG review. USG resistance to compromise on developmental issues, Kassianides feared, was generating friction with NAM nations that was undermining the OD negotiations. Kassianides was sanguine about other hurdles to the OD, for instance, the establishment of the Human Rights Council, which he believed was on track. Once the P-3 reached harmony, the rest would fall into place, he believed.

2. (C) Kassianides argued that the latest French-proposed compromise on development accentuates the voluntary nature of financing projects such as the airline ticket tax. On the environment, he said France was maintaining its call for a revamped UN body on the environment in place of the Nairobi-based UNEP, but that France understood this initiative would fall short of establishing a new UN agency and that there would be strict limitations on size and operations. (Kassianides intimated that France would favor a different location for the new body and asked why the USG should care whether UNEP's successor abandoned Nairobi.)

3. (C) An admittedly discouraged Kassianides worried that the USG might allow the OD to founder and said he half-expected USUN to substitute a 2-3 page document at the last minute in lieu of the OD.

4. (C) Comment: Kassianides' fixation on the themes of development and the environment as the main stumbling blocks to a successful summit outcome reflects the publicly announced priorities of the French presidency. His relative confidence about the ease of resolving other challenges -- for instance, management reform or establishing the Human Rights Council -- was surprising and he admitted he had not been following those questions as attentively. Yet his perspective may also derive from how the French mission in New York is packaging and conveying information on the ongoing negotiations, often bypassing senior personnel at the Quai -- according to Kassianides -- through private communications with presidential diplomatic advisor Maurice Gordault-Montagne.

STAPLETON